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THE BOUDOIR—ARTICLE NUMBER SIX.

IN the midst of the really great advances made during the last ten or fifteen years in furnishing and art matters generally, there have been some critics who have doubted the genuineness of the movement. As a matter of fact it has become much less difficult to obtain really good artistic work done than was the case some years ago, but I think our critics are only too correct when they say that good artistic and substantially durable works continue too much to be a luxury enjoyed only by the rich or well-to-do.

It is wonderful when we think of the rapid strides made by both England and America of late years in the matter of arts and science. The conditions of all grades of society have improved for the better, more especially the working classes, and articles, which were at one time considered as luxuries, are now enjoyed as a matter of course.

Although, happily, the conditions of the working and lower middle classes are now so very satisfactory, compared with what they were, it is still very unsatisfactory to think that art has not yet reached their homes; the very fact that they desire, what some may think superfluous luxuries, has created a large trade in common, trashy, showy furniture, knocked up with all the attributes of good, sound workmanship wanting; the consequence is, this class of furniture soon falls to pieces, and new articles are purchased to replace them. It is very true that demand creates supply, but let us hope that still further development will soon create a demand of a different kind.

Fashion is greatly to blame for this state of things; when our forefathers and mothers set up house-keeping, they were content to order their chairs and tables after the same pattern supplied to their parents before them, and have kept them in their families to be handed down from one generation to another, and may still be met with in the homes of our country people, in some cases as strong as when they were first made. Let us hope that education, and the enterprise of our manufacturers will do a great deal to help us reach this desirable standard.

Every boy and girl should have some amount of art education; it is quite as necessary that they should be able to draw well, as to be able to read and write; of course we cannot all be artists, neither can we all hope to be authors, because we have learnt to write, but sufficient knowledge can be derived from study to enable us to understand and appreciate art when we see it.

How much that which is good and delightful in this life is enjoyed by the cultivated mind, simply because what is read, seen, or heard is better understood; take, for instance, poetry and classical music, which are not generally ap-

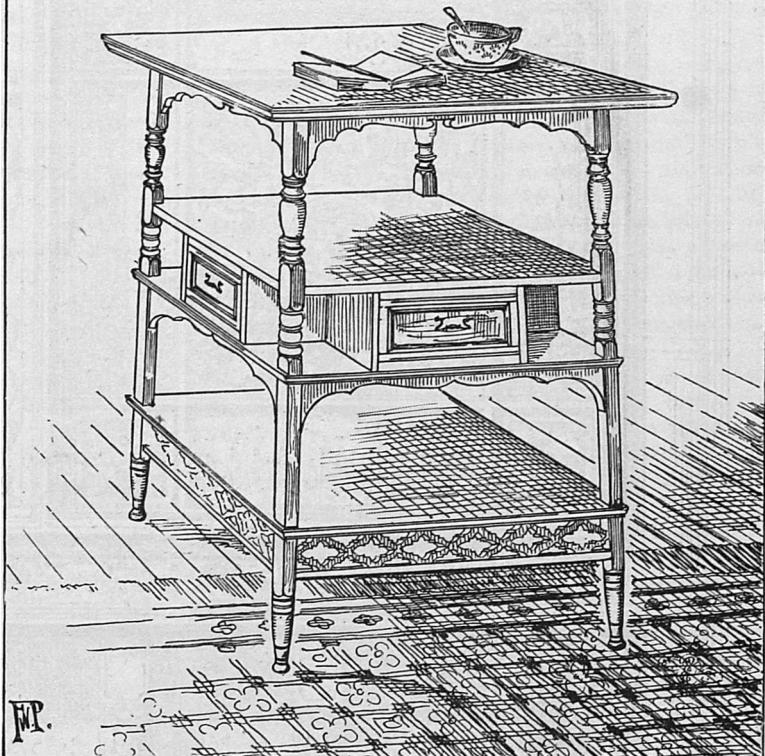
preciated at their proper value. It is not because they are not good, but being so much more difficult to understand, the mind is not accessible to their influence; but with regard to music, how much more are simple taking airs enjoyed; the reason is that they require little or no study, and so it is with art; the educated mind will see beauties which fail to attract and delight the uncultured.

A great deal of the present satisfactory state of art, and likewise the commercial prosperity of this country, is due to the noble labors of the late Prince Consort. The great amount of incalculable good done for Great Britain and indirectly for America from his incessant endeavors to improve the art manufactures, still continue to bear rich fruit.

The impetus given to trade from the great exhibition of 1851, the establishment of schools of art and museums all over the country, and the institution of that splendid collection of art workmanship at South Kensington Museum, are clearly the results of his solicitous advice and influence.

I think it is very much to be regretted that South Kensington was selected to be the home for this unique collection of art treasures; how much more good this museum would

Work Table

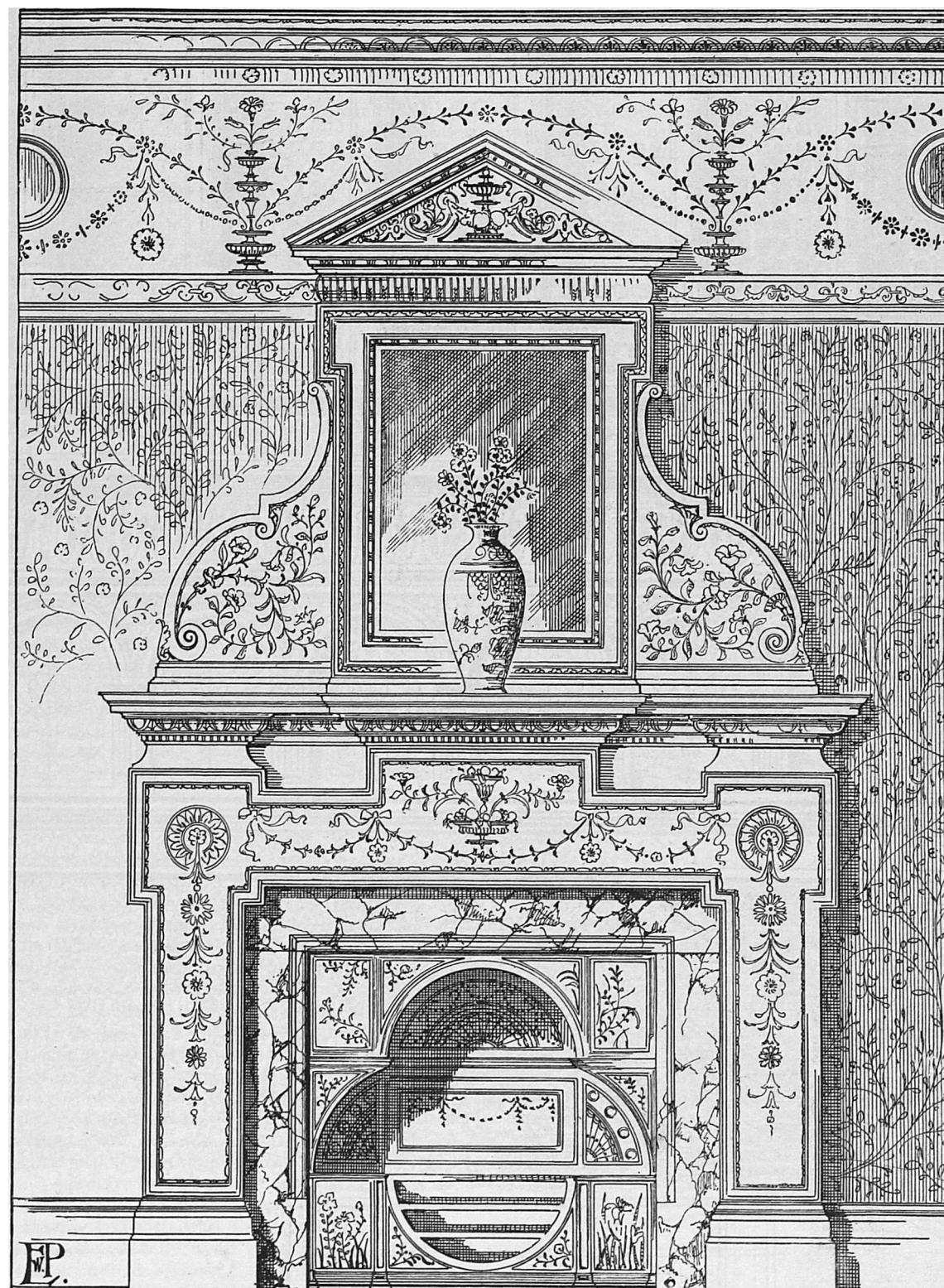


have done, and could do had it been erected in the midst of our vast and busy city of London I cannot say, but I have no doubt the number of visitors would have been nearly doubled, and the amount of good it has already done equally diffused.

Ruskin very forcibly says: "Beautiful art can only be produced by people who have beautiful things about them, and leisure to look at them; and unless you provide some elements of beauty for your workmen to be surrounded by, you will find that no elements of beauty can be invented by them."

In furnishing and decorating the boudoir—this being the ladies' private sitting-room—it partakes very much of the character of the drawing-room for graceful prettiness and comfort, and, although the decorations may be arranged in a delicate key, it is quite as often designed in a richer tone of coloring. No hard and fast rules can be laid down for any room, much less the drawing-room and boudoir, as it depends very much on the occupier for the taste necessary for arranging the furniture and the many nick-nacks that help to give it the character one may expect to find in a room devoted almost exclusively for the use of the fair sex.

As the boudoir of to-day is not the lounging rendezvous of callers that it was in the seventeenth century, the furnishings as well as the character have materially changed.



BOUDOIR CHIMNEY PIECE.